

Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee
August 18, 2005
UC 3171

Present: Borden, Buyarski, Chism, Evenbeck, Johnson, Jones, Souch, Verduzco

Evenbeck began by saying that a lot of reports have come out over the past 6-8 weeks we haven't met, and he thought he should share. One thing I want to put on the table early on is how to ramp up the work with the schools by asking them for things through the year. That may come out of the subcommittees, but it's something we should attend to. The campus-wide level hasn't worried a lot about seniors; UC tries to do things but we don't have the seniors. WE need to do things to foster schools upping the ante.

I want to talk briefly about the handouts. You have the doubling report, which can still be an agenda for this group—you have copies of the charge that we got in the beginning and the annual report last year. WE don't want to lose attention to that. There is a roster of who the players are—this group, the additional subcommittees and Gateway.

It was noted there was a retention problem within the steering committee—Catherine and Vic are leaving.

We wanted to ask Steve to give an update on Civic Engagement Council.

Jones highlighted what's on the report—he has not been on the council for civic engagement but will be this year. Defining and assessing civic learning outcomes for students, and then working with faculty to integrate it more intentionally in course content. Service learning, internships are engaged pedagogies—require students to be more directly engaged with course material, community, etc. That's the most direct link—what can the council do to help faculty be more adept at helping students integrate these into the curriculum? Last year the focus was on campus-wide indicators on civic engagement. Also creating the Public Scholar position at the faculty level and school commitments to engagement. VB: The flip of faculty strategies is tracking—this will require a cultural change in how units account for student enrollment and characterizing specific events as service-learning events. This hasn't been implemented yet. There was a meeting with Mark Grove and were told it requires approval among all campuses, etc. Jones heard Plater was attempting to get an electronic vote. It fits with the Lilly Brain Gain effort. The technology isn't the challenge—it's the responsibility at the school level to record (plus there's noncredit dimension). Once it's in place it will be an effective assessment tool. SE: No requirements—only if people choose to make use of it? VB: Every student will have an experiential learning experience—this is something Plater would like to see, but is just now being formulated and has not been vetted to the faculty.

The civic eng council will, once this has been approved and it's making its way to the schools, the council will work to clarify language and answer questions. VB: It will be entered specifically into the system and schools can correct it centrally. SJ: The

hypothesis is that more engagement opportunities results in higher retention. If proven, it would help sell the idea.

Evenbeck was impressed with the UAB scorecard—it categorized things the campus wanted. VB: This is more effective because it standardizes the collection of data (which UAB doesn't have). CS: If students want to get the experience without spending on the credit, how would that work? VB: There has to be faculty ownership. SJ: Patty Clayton from NCSU at CTL has been working with us and a cohort of 16 faculty on deepening reflection practices. Some faculty teach service learning and others don't. She's coming next month to work with this cohort (3rd session) and one with this year's Gateway scholars. SE: We talked about a more public gathering Gateway group could take advantage of—still working on. SJ: She works with deepening reflection as valid & reliable measure of student learning. How do you create, assess, give students tools to develop? Working with Hamilton and tying to ePortfolio. September 22. Faculty cohort September 23.

American DP is working on this and there's a gathering early Nov. near Houston that George McCaffry is organizing. IUPUI might want to have people go. Will send details to group when get them. 3 pieces: best practices, how assess, principles. Follow up to meeting in Portland. Sandra Harper is organizer.

Foundations project: Beginning of a report: Went back to foundations report and culled out things that we said we needed to do to make this a better place for first-year students—we need to find those who will do this stuff. There's no template for continuing the work, but this seems like a good way to get started. My guess is some primary responsables will come from UC, Gateway, and maybe have this filled in by end of fall semester. Thought we would get Penn State attitudinal additional info but haven't gotten. Will share if get.

Seniors: Group met and broke activities into getting basic data to call attention to the issue; advising issues—Kathy and Cathy involved; and financial aid issues with Karen Whitney. The data group has had two meetings: had good discussion about how to characterize who seniors are, graduation rates at departmental measure, “wandering” index; bottleneck courses (couldn't get in or high DWFs); characteristics of students on probation (financial need?); where institution is putting efforts in. Met with Kathy Burton and have to be respectful of her increased demands—no report generated and not sure when will get data. We broke it down to modest measures—looking at problematic courses—registrar should have. Graduation rates, look at graduates and seniors—reconciling two different data systems makes it difficult. VB: to make it actionable info, you have to map it to the level people in programs identify with. We have to do this in EMC for their tasks—have the deans set targets for Fall 2006. That also has to be done at level people think at. Must go to program heads and say “This is what your program looks like in the system; how would you like it to look? What from the last system do you need it to look like?” Has to happen to get all this data down to program level. We do have the NSSE data for looking at issues seniors are having. CS: When we get this data it will have a good anecdotal impact—when we used raw numbers it got some

chairs' attention in Liberal Arts. SE: Could we have Science seniors/graduates like a ratio of productivity and some NSSE info? VB: But school-level doesn't work—needs to be by department. This is the year to retrofit the systems so we can have trends again. Even if it takes most of the semester to accomplish. NSSE is available to the schools. Question is how to put it to use. SE: Part of our charge?

Wandering index: CB: Info was in SIS; problem with IUIS was that data was updated each semester, so it wouldn't reflect a student who changed three times. KJ: Wonder if could track patterns of emigration/immigration by department. VB: Could look over time but entry is different by department. A lot of it is getting it down to the right level. Most important for Engineering, Science, and Technology. Kathy Burton promised course data during semester. CS: Could talk to interested department chairs—give them ways to think about this. VB: % of seniors by school from a few years back is still pertinent—could send to deans and say why don't you think about. NC: We have to ask deans and chairs to think about why—that solves the labor problem. CS: Burke did this—surveyed each student.

Advising: Met in may and have been wringing hands over basic data on what's going on in schools—question as to how much departments within schools use which; disconnect between UC and schools; maybe advisors need to be more intrusive with seniors. Good bang for our buck to get more people through quickly. Will interview advisors—specific questions for joint/liaisons to go to schools to get a picture of what's being done. CB: used to do day long advising symposium for campus—this year have monthly meetings, hold same session twice to get more faculty involved, and advisors will design survey to faculty advisors about professional development. Tricia Hey is contacting schools to be on this committee so it's not a UCOL initiative. CS: This is perfect for CTE funding. Might not be ready. Buyarski is going to develop a pre-health professions specialized advising center. Association of Deans and Directors of University Colleges out of Texas gives coordination and funding for advising to get everyone on same page. **Can see if this would be good opportunity.** More professional advising for schools don't want to lose connection with faculty.

Financial aid: serious issue; Mortenson report shows this. Steering committee needs to keep this on the agenda. VB: Can FASPAC be made to take this issue? Kathy Burton is their analytic power, but they will be hiring another Vic. CS: What about simple descriptive data? SE: Asked Beth Barnette for analyses. VB: Kathy Burton does those every year. SE: Keeping issue on front burner. SJ: How much financial aid is need based? SE: Most institutional is merit based. One person in CSL did the AIP. You should see the flow chart of how work study works at this institution.

Degree completion: Good news: There are newer data than what's in the plater report—98 6-year rate is up to 23.1 from 22.1%. Problem is the “2003 rate” is for the 97 cohort and the new rate is the 98 cohort. Remember the first cohort that had the increase. Another 2 years before we can see whether the increasing retention rates will impact the

graduation rates. It'll be another 5-6 years before we see what initiatives will do. We saw decline in fall-spring last year, but there certainly won't be an increase this year. Next year—freshman class now taking in is better qualified. Last fall we let in a few hundred students we shouldn't have let in. Don't expect an increase for this year, but it might start going up. (Dist Cohort by intended degree 1997, 1998). Look at 12 or more credits—80%. Look at the number of those who had less than 2.0 in 1997. Last fall the percent getting less than 2.0 bumped back up. It goes to preparation, placement, pedagogies (three Ps) themes for the year. Each is looked at in different ways—more control in placement—less reliance on departmental input; it can be done centrally. Buyarski could think of initiatives to ensure students more appropriately placed. If working on freshmen won't see anything for 8 years or so. Need to think about students who entered late 90s early 00s. SE: See these like Ball State talks about 3 year finish. Do programs like that work? VB: Hard to say—AD Programs attract different students. James Johnson has initiative. CB: % of tuition increases would be refunded if graduate in 4 years. VB: If take course second time free, or lose funding—states go both ways. Not sure what makes the difference well into career. Work and family commitments are all working against us. Not sure about effectiveness of incentives, but worth piloting. Probably different issues by department. CS: Might be something else to get them to think about what they're seeing at certain points in degree. VB: Even tracking students personally at dept level adds to the contacts. SJ: We know what some bottleneck courses are and could probably find DFW beyond first year. We have lots of academic interventions here, but do they persist at school level? If we know statistics will be hard for lot of students, do those programs have interventions to help students over the hump? Most institutions have all kinds of supports for first-year students, but where are the programs that continue? KJ: Wonder if a way to add incentives beyond a one-page sheet for chairs? You get money for credit hours—is there a way to drive dollars back to budgets to graduation issues instead of enrollments. VB: Have pull money out of credit hour allocation and offer \$1000 per graduate. SE: We should propose something. Here it goes all to the teaching department rather than the major budget.

We had over 6,000 degree completions and the BA numbers are almost halfway toward the doubling goal. Portends poorly for the pipeline because we emptied quite a bit. We were flat and went up 200, 220, 270, and then 500. Undergrad enrollment has declined—increases are in graduate. Our credit hours are going up, but that's because more full time students. That means more are likely to graduate sooner, but what's changed dramatically over 5 years is number of transfers. Transfers are more likely to graduate, so we're doing well by taking them. We won't keep up the level of increase we had this year; if we did we'd meet doubling goals in a couple years. 6 year grad rate will go up a little, but transfers are our growth undergrad population. We're taking in transfers equally split between freshmen and sophomores—better than it used to be (more freshmen in the past).

CTE: One on advising, seniors in transition and what do to serve them. Career Center focus as Solution Center takes over internships, but it seems this council could hold up some models and practices to help schools do better job with seniors. Anything out there? MV: CTE proposal might focus on doing some investigation and making

recommendations at that level. SE: **Ask for cash to do study in support of different initiatives of the council.** CS and KJ can take on. Funding will be lower than we thought. SE: related to the work of this council, Buyarski's health professions is relevant to this council, and seniors and advising issues, and wonder about career stuff—plan b. Joint career advisor is starting to draft letters to the students not admitted to capped majors. **WE could write proposal for more focused position within Career Center.** Even if we're not funded it would get the thinking out there. CB: Scholarship proposal: students who are 21st century scholars are eligible if enroll full time but also low income so work full time. Propose X students from high schools get living stipend, and maybe add cash for every year persist.

MV: What about forgiveness policy? SE: Just need to implement what the faculty passed five times. CB: but they're coming within the window and aren't eligible for forgiveness.

Other items for Council's agenda: Sociology has an engaged department grant—one reason they even applied was retention of their majors. If they begin service learning in their gateway classes it'll keep students engaged and then continue throughout major with engagement activities. We'll have money for these partnership grants, so from that standpoint folks from this council can encourage people to look for those opportunities. SE: Should we ask you to report to full council CS: It's the disconnect between first-year courses and the majors—very few intro sociology students who are majors. Talk about senior issues as well as first-year retention—get out of exclusive context of Gateway initiatives.